



# CASTLETOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Pupil Attendance Policy

### **Introduction**

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Castletown Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils. It acknowledges that irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within school.

This policy has been developed in consultation with Governors, Teachers, Education Welfare Services and pupil's Parents and Guardians. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the schools commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil's attendance.

The policy will aim to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupil's successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

### **Statements of expectations:**

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

### **What is expected of the pupils:**

- To respect themselves and others.
- To do all they can to attend school regularly and punctually.
- To inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied.
- To encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- To be happy and encourage others to feel happy.

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and stay in school for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that the children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them. Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

### **What is expected of the Parents:**

- To keep requests for their child to be absent to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence.
- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- To work closely with the school and 'Attendance 100' to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance.
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will not be authorised by school.
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as SATS or the numeracy and literacy hour.
- To support their child and recognize their successes and achievements.

The school will endeavour to provide an environment that is conducive in educating every individual pupil. School attendance will be positively supported wherever possible and the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount. The school has a statutory responsibility to record and monitor the punctuality and attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions. A register of attendance has to be taken once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The register has to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent the register must record whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **What is expected of the School:**

- To create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- To meet the legal requirements set out by Government.
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To consistently record authorised and unauthorised absences with the guidance of the 1995 education act.
- To develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- To develop procedures for the reintegration of long term absentees.
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the LA attendance team.
- To adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

The Local Authority has a responsibility to provide education and promote regular attendance of all statutory school age children. Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) the Local Authority provides support to schools and parents to fulfil their legal duty. The EWS is the enforcement agency of the LEA and as well as providing guidance and support through its officers may take a parent to court for not fulfilling their duty under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The court may fine the parent and put in place a School Attendance Order (SAO), an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a Parenting Order.

### **School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

#### **Recording**

The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at **8.55am**. At **9.05am** the register is taken to the school office. Any late pupils should then enter the school through the main entrance. If any pupil arrives late the office staff will record the name, class, time and reason for lateness. If a child arrives unaccompanied by a parent the office staff will complete the record asking the pupil to offer a reason. All staff need to be aware that any child arriving late **MUST** register at the office for purposes of fire regulations.

Each morning and afternoon absences will be recorded onto the electronic registration system and all the present pupils marked present. The offered reason for any lates from the previous day or any absences will be assessed and

the appropriate code entered into the system. The register is returned back to the class teacher before the start of the afternoon session and the register is again taken.

Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone or by letter. The school may then decide if it wishes to authorise the absence or record it as an unauthorised absence. This decision will be made within the guidance set out in the 1996 Education Act, which identifies the following reasons as acceptable reasons for an authorised absence.

- The child is ill or is prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The child lives over a certain distance from the school and either the LEA has failed to make suitable arrangements to register the child at a nearer school or the LEA has failed to make suitable transport arrangements.
- The child is absent on days exclusively set apart from religious observance in their particular faith.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. The school will contact parents who have not offered a reason.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Day of absence**

- Parent/carer to contact school with reason by phone and/or letter, prior to the start of the school day.
- If no communication has been made by 9.30am school will phone parent to inform them that their child is not in school and enquire about a reason why. (***It is essential that parents/carers ensure that school always have up to date contact numbers***)
- If no contact can be made on parent/carer number, a message will be left on the answer phone requesting that parent contacts school.
- If child remains absent for a second day without any contact by parents, school will ring other contact numbers.
- In the case of a child who is on Child Protection, school will contact children's services if they are unable to contact parents on the second day of absence.

#### **School Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance**

A set of standard codes are used consistently with the register. These codes are input into the electronic register as required and are used to give depth of meaning to the register and provide statistical meaning to the absences.

#### **Monitoring**

Children management team and the school attendance officer will review the attendance of all pupils on a fortnightly basis. Any child whose attendance is 93% or less will be closely monitored and will receive a letter of concern from 'Attendance 100.' If attendance continues to be a concern, the attendance officer will visit the family and a meeting between the Headteacher, parent and attendance officer may be convened.

#### **Requests for leave of absence**

If a parent wishes to request a period of leave for exceptional circumstances, they are required to write to the Headteacher. If the request is denied the school will inform the parent of the reason by letter and the request will be noted in the electronic register.

**No authorisation will be given for any holidays taken during term time.**

*The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school 'regularly' means that children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child absent from school without authorization for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. When unauthorised absence occurs, Castletown Primary School will exercise its right to request the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice. The Supreme Court clarifies that there is no automatic right to absence from school for the purposes of a holiday taken during term time. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with Sunderland City Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices. Fixed penalty notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents means each parent will receive 2 notices for the amount of £60 each, totally £120 for both children. This is increased to £120 per child if it is not paid within 21 days). Further information or clarification can be sought from Elaine Matterson on 0191 5615632 or by email to [elaine.matterson@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.matterson@sunderland.gov.uk).*

#### **Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality.**

- Class teacher will ensure that the curriculum is delivered within a culture of inclusion and in such a way that pupils feel that they have and can succeed.
- Individual pupils whose attendance has been a cause for concern will be encouraged to set and achieve personal attendance goals.
- Half termly class attendance averages will be published on the school web site
- Positive verbal reinforcement is given to pupils who have been absent from school for a period of time and an education action plan developed to help them catch up with any missed curriculum and promote future attendance.
- School will support and reward pupils with consistently good attendance. Each term the year group with the best average attendance will have a reward in school. All children who have 100% attendance over a term will go into a prize draw for a substantial reward ie a bike, family ticket to a theme park, family accommodation at a local hotel with the use of facilities etc.

***Policy to be reviewed Autumn term 2019.***